

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, April 21. 1709.

In my last I started a Thought big with vast Projects, and productive of the best Consequences that perhaps ever attended one single Scene of Politicks in the World— Viz. How a Constitution form'd upon the present powerful Confederacy in Europe, and made perpetual Might for ever preserve the Peace of this Part of the World, make it self Arbiter of all the Disputes that shoud forever happen among the several Powers; and banish Tyranny from all the Nations of Europe.

But as I shall re-assume this Discourse, when Things are a little forwarder towards a Settlement. I shall say no more to it now; I doubt the World is not in a Temper suitable to so much Good, nor are our

Eyes open to so great Advantages, as would attend such a Concert of Interests; Pride and Party Jealousie reigns too much among the Politicians of the Age, and there is not a National Confidence among Protestants suited to so glorious a Work— But who knows what Time may produce? In the mean time I resolve not to be wanting in laying the Advantages of it before them, neither shall I be wanting in frankly telling them of the Neglect.

But I am to return to the Article of Peace— And here I am told—I talk arrogantly, for that I speak of Peace as a Thing in our own Hands, when the Case is evident, the French make no satisfactory Offers, and both Sides are preparing with the

the utmost Diligence and Application to appear in the Field.

I'll speak directly to the Point, and let others judge for me, whether I am too forward — If all our Accounts from France do not deceive us, if all Men are not Liars, let the French put what Face they will upon their Affairs, we know, they are in no Condition to defend themselves; if they go on, they must be undone; they are as well able to remove Mountains, as look the Confederates in the Face; perhaps they may push upon the Empire, and ravage the Palatinate, they may raise Contributions upon the Germans, and ruin the Duke of Wurtemburg; but in Flanders they are ruin'd, if they venture it, and the Reason is plain,

They have GOD and Nature to struggle with.

They have Famine at Home to distress them, and Want of Money in the War.

For the First it is remarkable. France is a warm Climate, and the Plants, Shrubs, and Trees are tenderer than in other Parts; and this having been a severer Winter, than Nature could defend it self against, the Cold has made Havock of every such Thing; impartial People that come from thence just now, tell us, that there is hardly any Thing green to be seen on the Ground. — What Distress this puts the whole Kingdom to, and in what Disorder the People are about it, any one may guess; and if the mild Weather, we have now, does not speedily revive them, the People will perish of meer Hunger — That it has been so, is easie to determine, when at Venice, and at Rome, and those Countries which very rarely feel any Cold, their Rivers and Canals have been frozen over, and their fine Groves and Walks of Oranges and Citron, the Mirtles, and all their tender Plants have been destroy'd; thus GOD seems to chastise France, and put him in Mind of his approaching Downfall.

But let us come to Nature, by which I mean the Nature of Things acting; the

French have all common Possibilities to fight against.

If any Man ask me, by what Fund of Wealth we have carry'd on this War, and out of what Treasure we have expended 7 Millions Sterling per Ann. or to make it speak French, 90 Millions a Year; a Sum, which by common Computation, is more than we have in Specie circulating in the whole Island — The Answer is direct, it has been by a Fund of Credit — The Credit of our publick Funds has upheld us — And on this Account it is that I have said, and let it offend who it will, I must say it still, He that has restor'd, re-establish'd, and maintain'd our Credit, has been the General of our Generals, and to him under GOD we owe, and ought to own great Part of the Success of this War.

Let us now search a little into the contrary at home and abroad — At home, in what more sensible Branch could our Enemies hurt us at the Time of their Pretender's design'd Invasion last Year, than at the same time to contrive a Run upon our publick Credit? Had our Credit receiv'd a Blow, had the Circulation of our Funds been stop'd, had our Bank and Exchequer Paper-Credit sunk to 20 per Cent. Discount, what had our Condition been? It is evident, our ready Money is not sufficient to carry on the War, or to manage the publick Affairs — No Nation has a Stock of Specie able to do such a Work, and our Condition must have been the same in another Campaign, as the Condition of the French is now.

The surprizing Extremity of the French Affairs is nothing else than this — Nothing but a Rupture of their publick Credit; and indeed it had need be nothing else but this; 'tis like a Man dying, what ails him? Nothing but Want of Breath, or Nothing but Want of Spirits, you had as good say, Nothing but Death — Credit is the Life of the whole Affair; all the Specie of Gold and Silver in France will not carry on their Affairs without Credit, and all the Silver and Gold in France will not restore their Credit — This Rupture of Credit is the Victory we get over them; what is Life, or what are all the Advantages

ges we gain'd of them last Year? Had their Credit been maintained, it had been nothing to them, you would have seen new Regiments, and new Armies, and new Fortifications ~~like~~ as it were out of the Ruins of the Old. But a Stop of Circulation stagnates the Blood, a Stop of Credit is a Stop of Circulation, and the Cash of the Kingdom, which is the Blood and the Life of their Affairs, stagnates; from hence come dead Palsies, Apoplextic Fitts, and all Manner of Convulsions in their Affairs; the Spring of Management runs down, and nothing can wind it up again; the Water falls off from the Mill, and no Strength of Hand can turn the Wheel.

This is now the Condition of the Enemy, and they know it; upon this Foot they offer you your own Terms, and give me Leave to say, I fear more, that the Allies shall not readily concert their own Terms, and act candidly and unanimously for and with one another in their Demands, than that the French should not grant all you ask.

There is no doubt, but Britain and Holland are good Judges, and ought to determine, for every Branch of this Alliance, what Demands they ought to make, and what they ought to be contented with: The Weight, the Sum, and the Substance of the whole War has lain upon these Shoulders, nay and upon Britain, still more than all the rest. — I will not suppose, that any Confederate shall be less solicitous, for what Britain ought to obtain in the ensuing Peace, than we are for them; but this I make no Difficulty to assert, that Britain will be the last Branch of the Alliance, whose Demands the French will come up to; our Terms are the most pinching, our Demands touch his Honour most, and I doubt not, he will give *Charte Blanche* to all the rest of the Allies to leave us out.

I won't say, this will not try the Honour of our Allies, neither will I so much as suggest, that any of them will comply without us; but it is easie to see, That in granting to some Nations all they can ask, the Design of the French is to make those Nations think, some Things we may insist upon of

too little Consequence to carry on the War for— And so blame our Nicety, as insisting too positively, &c. without Reason.

To remedy this, there needs no more than for the British and the Dutch Interests to link fast together, and infist upon every thing that is their separate Interest, as their Joint Interest. — The Dutch have given manifest Proof of their Fidelity to the grand Alliance, nor will I doubt that they shall continue so; they have frankly rejected all separate Offers of treating, and hitherto have gone hand-in-hand with the whole Confederacy, neither will I put it into any Body's Head to question any particular Branch: But this I will say, that the whole Substance of the Peace, now in transacting, depends upon every Branch of this Alliance, continuing firm to every Branch; that the just Demands of every side may be answer'd and yielded — And whoever they are, that being satisfy'd in their own Demands, shall give up the just Demands of Britain — They betray the Confederacy, let it fall where it will.

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